

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
November 16, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner V. White (chair) Commissioner C. Elliott; Jodi Maurer, Parent Representative; District Staff: Dr. Jennifer Gkourlias, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Djinga St. Louis, and Dr. Jeanette Silvers; Dr. Susan Goodwin (Rochester Teacher Center), Ms. Delores Jackson Radney (Kuumba Consultants); Mary Adams (CETF Member); Board Staff: Jacqueline Morgan

Absent: Commissioner W. Powell

Commissioner White called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

I. Minutes

Motion to approve October was made by Commissioner Elliott; seconded by Commissioner White.

II. African/African American Studies Curriculum Update

Due to the lack of time, the African/African American Studies Curriculum Update presentation was not received at this time. However, a written report will be forwarded to this committee, as well as to the full Board.

III. Teaching American History Professional Development Grant (Dr. Susan Goodwin – Rochester Teacher Center)

Dr. Goodwin presented a power point presentation that outlined ways that teachers could utilize professional development training for teaching American History in grades K-2; particularly related to African/African American Studies. Dr. Goodwin detailed what framework should be with respect to teaching children of color. She noted that the textbooks and curriculum materials are insensitive to the African American and Hispanic cultures.

Dr. Goodwin suggested the following constructs for teaching K-2 American History:

- Teachers as professionals

- Families and community
- Emancipatory pedagogy
- Cultural knowledge
- Systemic analysis
- Classroom environment
- Student expertise

Dr. Goodwin noted that she, along with others, have published several textbooks that are culturally sensitive that are available for use in the District. And, in fact, have been utilized by some teachers.

Dr. Goodwin pointed out the following themes teachers need to know in teaching K-2 American History:

- ▶ A multicultural curriculum
- ▶ How to connect parents and families to the curriculum
- ▶ Cultural authentic assessments
- ▶ American history content and learning experience

Dr. Goodwin stated that our students do not see themselves in the curriculum; and that the materials currently used need to be assessed.

IV. Teaching American History Professional Development Grant (Ms. Delores Jackson Radney – Kuumba Consultants)

Ms. Radney gave a presentation that outlined how an African American Art Series could be utilized by providing interactive workshops for teachers.

Kuumba Consultants proposes a series of interactive workshops to teach RCSD teachers about African American history and culture. Ms. Jackson noted that African American history and culture is the cultural background for the majority of students; and that RCSD teachers will benefit by learning about and teaching African American history and culture as part of an inclusive curriculum to the students of the District.

The workshops were outlined as follows:

All workshops will be taught by local scholars and historians. Each workshop presenter will teach a workshop appropriate for each grade level.

Each Workshop would be 90 -120 minutes each and would be offered as a summer/school break course or as a series of individual workshops throughout the year.

The workshops would focus on the following topics utilizing scholars in our community:

African American History
Art History
Literature
Music

Ms. Radney noted that she specifically wants to ensure that teachers have the knowledge that is needed so that they in turn are equipped to use it in their classrooms and integrated it into their teaching.

Commissioner Elliott noted the concern is that teachers are not mandated to take the Teaching American History professional development training and requested that Mr. Urbanski respond to that statement.

Mr. Urbanski stated that Commissioner Elliott was accurate; however, there are ways to encourage teachers to opt to take this PD. One of the most effective ways is to offer professional development credit for participation.

Commissioner White asked how many teachers have currently sign up for the upcoming PD session. Dr. Gkourlias stated that there are presently 60 teachers signed up and identified for the training.

Ms. Radney noted that when artists come into the classroom they create an atmosphere of community which is a good model for teachers to use as ways to communicate to our students. She also noted that teachers should find ways to integrate African American history and culture into the curriculum already in place.

V. 2009-10 District Suspension Report

Due to the lack of time, the 2009-10 District Suspension Report was not received at this time. However, a written report will be forwarded to this committee, as well as to the full Board.

VI. Miscellaneous

Mary Adams, of CETF, noted that as a follow-up to last month's ESA Committee meeting, a central part of the CETF proposal is for Susan Goodwin to have a leadership role in implementing the TAH K-2 grant. She noted that that would involve some formalizing of responsibilities,

compensation, etc. Ms. Adams requested that CETF be given an update on where that process stands.

She also noted that Dr. Gkourlias had agreed to find out if the parent participation piece of their proposal could be supported by the grant or other sources.

Dr. Gkourlias stated that to date, she has contacted Bonnie Carter of the Federal U.S. Department of Education, who is the federal officer who oversees the TAH project. She received an email from Ms. Carter stating that the interpretation of the statute, in terms of how the funds are to be allocated, does not allow us to pay parents, only teachers. She is looking for other sources of funding that may be available for paying parents as partners, including searching out the availability of Title 1 funds.

Dr. Gkourlias stated that she would like to invite parents and members of the community to serve as steering members on the steering committee.

Her goal is to have a plan that can be reviewed at the December ESA Committee meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. was moved by Commissioner Elliott.

The next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee is scheduled to meet on December 14, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in 3A/3B. This meeting will be a committee meeting of-the-whole to receive updates on the K-2 Social Studies textbooks adoption and the School Portfolio.